Legal Services Society

Service Plan

2005/2006 – 2007/2008

Legal
Services
Society

British Columbia
www.lss.bc.ca

Providing legal aid in British Columbia since 1979

For more information

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Cover art: Denise Tremblay

Cover photo top: Family Duty Counsel (FDC) Kathryn Ferriss (left) and FDC Intake Assistant Slavka Andrejevic at Robson Square Provincial Court, Vancouver. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Cover photo middle: Legal information outreach workers (from left, back row) Kim Shelley (Victoria), Janet Freeman (Vancouver), Shelley Robertson (Prince George), Christine Lougheed (Kamloops); (from left, front row) Carol Shaeffer (Prince Rupert), Ginny Aiello (Terrace), Sherry Scott (Kelowna), and Sandy Garneau (Surrey) help clients around the province use LSS services. Missing from photo: Michelle Angus (Terrace). *Brenda Rose photo*

Cover photo bottom: Legal information outreach worker Sandy Garneau (Surrey) demonstrates the LawLINK kiosk in Port Coquitlam Provincial Courthouse. *Brenda Rose photo*

Letter from the Board Chair to the Minister Responsible and Accountability Statement

November 30, 2004

The Honourable Geoff Plant, QC
Attorney General
Province of British Columbia

Dear Mr. Attorney:

On behalf of the board of directors and employees of the Legal Services Society (LSS), I am pleased to present our service plan for 2005/2006 – 2007/2008.

The Legal Services Society continues to take an innovative and collaborative approach to providing legal aid services for people with low incomes in British Columbia. Our plans for the next three years include expanding the highly successful family duty counsel and LawLINE projects. In addition, the society will implement viable changes recommended in last year's tariff review and tariff lawyer survey to build our capacity to deliver legal aid via private bar lawyers. LSS will assess alternative funding methods that will allow us to broaden innovative pilot projects such as LawLINK, legal information outreach workers, and Supreme Court duty counsel and advice services. We will expand quality assurance initiatives to ensure clients receive the best representation possible within available LSS dollars. And the society will continue to evaluate its own performance using provider, employee, intermediary, and client surveys.

To further align efforts and provide clear direction across the organization, LSS has expanded its service plan this year to show the linkages between its service plan objectives and its programs and management functions. We've done this to provide the reader with a more complete picture of the activities LSS uses to achieve its mission, and to ensure that every LSS employee sees how his or her work contributes to the society's goal: "Services that respond to the needs of low income individuals are available in BC."

LSS faces many challenges and opportunities in 2005 – 2008. Managing to capacity continues to be critical. The society's proven record as an innovative, entrepreneurial organization creates its own demands, as management and staff strive to find time and resources to meet expectations and pursue successful ideas. These challenges are exacerbated by the need for LSS to regularly seek additional, stable funding to convert successful projects into core services. Tariff system pressure continues to threaten LSS success and is the driving force behind several tariff renewal initiatives planned for 2005 – 2008. Reform within the justice system provides LSS with a unique opportunity to promote changes that will improve access to responsive legal services for people with low incomes. However, reform may also increase expectations and service demands on the society.

LSS staff, management, and board remain committed to applying their resources and influence to provide quality legal services for low income British Columbians in the most cost-effective way possible. During 2004, the relocation of the society's central Vancouver services to 510 Burrard Street allowed us to consolidate our services and to maximize our capacity to meet future service needs. We are all proud of the strong reputation and credibility of the society and believe our plans for 2005 – 2008 will enhance our ability to carry out our mission.

The *Legal Services Society Service Plan 2005/2006 – 2007/2008* was prepared under the direction of the LSS Board of Directors in accordance with the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act. The LSS Board is accountable for the contents of the plan, including the selection of performance measures and targets. The plan is consistent with the BC government's strategic priorities and overall strategic plan. All significant assumptions, policy decisions, and identified risks, as of December 3, 2004, have been considered in preparing the plan. The LSS Board is accountable for ensuring the Legal Services Society achieves the specific objectives identified in the plan and for measuring and reporting actual performance.

Yours truly,

Bruce Hardy

Bruce Hardy
Acting Chair, LSS Board of Directors

Photos facing page, from the top:

Kim Grittner, Clinic Administrator and Intake Legal Assistant, in the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Kamala Namasivayam, Intake Legal Assistant, working in the Surrey Provincial Courthouse intake office. *Sandy Garneau photo*

(From left) Carolyn Rhee-Thompson, Supervisor, Facilities and Administration; Eugene Wandell, Manager, Finance; and Marie Harlow, General Accountant, meet at the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Alex Tang, Data Control Analyst, in the server room of the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Allan Parker, LawLINE Program Manager/Lawyer (left), and Bruno Drucker, LawLINE Lawyer, consult in the library at the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Denise Tremblay photo*

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Introduction

Providing legal aid to low-income Canadians is an essential public service. We need to think of it in the same way we think of health care or education. The well-being of our justice system — and the public's confidence in it — depends on it.

Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin,
Chief Justice of Canada
From remarks made at the University of Manitoba, February 1, 2002

Without legal aid, a recent report* from the Canadian Bar Association stresses, the poorest segments of our population could not take advantage of the protections and guarantees offered by our legal system and therefore would be denied access to justice.

To protect the integrity of our legal system and to give full meaning to the constitution that supports it, the report continues, everyone in Canada must have access to the courts and, by extension, to the information and legal advice that make access to the courts and to justice meaningful. For people at the lowest income levels; for people who cannot afford adequate housing, food, or clothing; for people who work at minimum wage or below and have families to support; for people who are disabled and dependent on social assistance, hiring a lawyer privately is impossible. For these people, legal aid is critical.

The report argues that inadequate legal aid funding is already taking its toll on lawyers who do legal aid work, on opposing counsel who have to contend with unrepresented parties, on the justice system, and, of course, on the many members of the public who are denied access to legal assistance.

The Legal Services Society is the primary provider of legal aid services in British Columbia. This document describes the society's three-year plan to address the legal needs of people with low incomes in BC and to ensure that these services are adequately funded.

* The text of this introduction was adapted with permission from *Making the Case: The Right to Publicly-Funded Legal Representation in Canada*, A Report of the Canadian Bar Association, February 2002.

Roxana Aune, LawLINE Paralegal, assists clients over the phone from the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Organizational Overview

The Legal Services Society is an independent, non-profit organization established by statute in 1979 to provide legal aid services in British Columbia.

Core services

LSS offers a continuum of services that includes legal representation, advice, advocacy, information, and education. These services include:

- legal representation for financially eligible people with serious family problems and/or serious criminal problems, and for some immigration, mental health law, and prison law matters;
- legal advice through the Brydges line, duty counsel programs, and enhanced LawLINE project; and
- legal information services through LawLINE, legal information outreach workers, intake staff, publications, and websites.

LSS services are delivered through —

- staff at 7 regional centres,
- local agents in 20 communities,
- about 1,000 private bar lawyers*,
- a province-wide toll-free call centre,
- a province-wide toll-free legal information line (LawLINE),
- legal information websites and publications,
- various intermediaries, and
- non-profit agencies.

Representation and advice programs

LSS provides legal representation to financially eligible people whose legal problems fall within the society's coverage guidelines.

Criminal, family, and immigration law

LSS provides legal representation for people who —

- are charged with a criminal offence and face jail, loss of livelihood, or deportation if found guilty;
- are victims of domestic violence and need a restraining order;
- have a child or children who are at risk and a supervised access order or restraining order is needed to protect them;
- need a change to their current custody or access order to ensure their and/or their child(ren)'s safety;
- need a non-removal order to prevent their child(ren) from being permanently removed from the province;

* Defined as a lawyer who has accepted a referral for a case opened during the year.

- are parents and the Ministry of Children and Family Development has taken or is threatening to take their children away from them; or
- face a refugee or deportation hearing and their case has a reasonable chance of success.

Mental health law

LSS provides legal representation at review panels for clients involuntarily detained under the Mental Health Act, and at BC Review Board hearings for clients found unfit to stand trial or not criminally responsible because of a mental disorder.

Prison law

LSS provides legal representation and assistance for prisoners as required under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in situations where clients are unable to protect their own liberty interests in a prison setting.

Slavka Andrejevic, FDC Intake Assistant (left), and Kathryn Ferriss, Family Duty Counsel, at the Robson Square Provincial Courthouse, Vancouver. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Duty counsel

Staff and private bar lawyers provide clients with advice about the charges against them, court procedures, and their legal rights (including the right to counsel and the right to apply for legal aid). This service includes representation at bail hearings, entering a guilty plea, or speaking to sentence. LSS also provides duty counsel in family courts across BC as part of a pilot project scheduled to continue to March 31, 2005 (to become a permanent program if budget approved — see page 6).

Brydges line

The Brydges line is a province-wide toll-free telephone service providing prompt access to legal advice for people who are arrested or detained, or who are under active investigation by the police or other law enforcement agencies but are not yet charged.

Legal information programs

People with low incomes who fall outside LSS financial eligibility and coverage criteria can still get legal information to help them with their legal problems. LSS provides legal information through LawLINE; its publications and websites; staff at LSS local agent offices and regional centres, including legal information outreach workers (LIOWs) and intake workers; and other agencies such as public libraries and government agent offices across the province.

LawLINE

Staff of LawLINE, the society's province-wide toll-free telephone service, provide callers with information about the law and referrals to other information or services that can help them resolve their legal problems. LawLINE also provides brief legal advice to financially eligible people as part of a pilot project (to become a permanent program if budget approved — see page 6).

Janna Cumming, LawLINE Lawyer, using the Family Law website from her office in the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Publications

LSS produces plain language publications about the law. These are distributed through LSS regional centres and local agent offices, public libraries, and government agent offices, as well as through some community organizations. Many are also available on LSS websites.

Donna Crawford, Administrative Assistant, Legal Information, Technology, and Communications, distributes LSS publications from the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Websites

LSS produces four websites:

- The LSS website provides information about the society and its services, as well as electronic publications about various aspects of the law. www.lss.bc.ca
- The Family Law in British Columbia website is designed to help people understand and use the law to resolve their family law problems. It is also a resource for people who are trying to help friends or clients. The site includes plain language publications on family law matters, self-help materials, and more. www.familylaw.lss.bc.ca
- LawLINK is designed to help clients and their advocates find legal information and self-help resources on the Internet. Public access computers featuring this website are located at all LSS regional centres and government agent offices, as well as some LSS local agent offices, provincial courthouses, and local community agencies. www.lawlink.bc.ca
- The Electronic Law Library provides online resources for advocates and advanced researchers looking for detailed legal information on topics ranging from Aboriginal law to young offenders. www.bcpl.gov.bc.ca/ell

LSS also supports PovNet, a searchable website for people on welfare, advocates, and community groups involved in anti-poverty work. PovNet provides information on and links to poverty law resources. www.povnet.org

Advocate education and support

LSS offers advocacy skills training and education in substantive law for community advocates and intermediaries. This includes an annual provincial conference on skills development as well as regional conferences on skills and changes to the law held throughout the year.

Innovation at LSS

As part of our commitment to innovation in the delivery of legal services, LSS has piloted a number of successful projects since fall 2002 and is now recommending that they continue as full-time programs.

Evaluations of projects such as family duty counsel, LawLINE advice services, and LawLINK indicate that these services are highly successful in helping clients resolve their legal problems, either without litigation or by giving them the advice and information they need to represent themselves in legal proceedings. The evaluations also show that LSS services are mutually enhancing; for example, family clients frequently use LawLINE and LawLINK in conjunction with family duty counsel. Two initiatives highlighted in the *LSS Service Plan 2004/2005 – 2006/2007* — the society's commitment to the Public Legal Education and Information Working Group and to strategic performance management — have already become permanent programs.

Proven initiatives to be established as permanent programs

LSS is recommending that the following successful projects become ongoing programs, if funding is available:

Family duty counsel

In the fall of 2002, LSS established family duty counsel pilot projects in provincial courts across BC. Family duty counsel give advice to unrepresented clients and speak on their behalf in court on simple matters, but they do not provide representation at trial. Evaluations indicate high client satisfaction with the service. Key respondents praised the project for helping to resolve family cases in a timely and effective manner.

Enhanced LawLINE

In September 2003, LSS initiated a pilot project to expand LawLINE to include brief legal services. Brief services include legal advice, help with correspondence and documents, and phone calls to third parties on a client's behalf.

Legal Information Outreach Worker Sandy Garneau (Surrey) demonstrates the LawLINK kiosk in the Port Coquitlam Provincial Courthouse. *Brenda Rose photo*

LawLINK and legal information outreach workers

The LawLINK website and public access computers allow LSS to provide clients with low-cost and sustainable access to legal information. In 2004, the number of public access computer locations grew to include some local agent offices, courthouses, and community agencies.

Legal information outreach workers, based in LSS regional centres, provide the education, awareness, support, and outreach clients and intermediaries need to understand and use LSS services, including the LawLINK website, family duty counsel, and LawLINE. This work ensures true access to legal aid for low income people is available in the communities served by LSS regional centres, and is critical to the continued success of the society's initiatives and new programs.

Legal Information Outreach Workers (from left, back row) Kim Shelley (Victoria), Janet Freeman (Vancouver), Shelley Robertson (Prince George), Christine Lougheed (Kamloops); (from left, front row) Carol Shaeffer (Prince Rupert), Ginny Aiello (Terrace), Sherry Scott (Kelowna), and Sandy Garneau (Surrey), help clients around the province use LSS services. LIOW Michelle Angus (Terrace) is missing from the photo. *Brenda Rose photo*

New initiatives

LSS plans to undertake the following initiatives within the next planning period, subject to available funding:

Supreme Court duty counsel and advice services

Duty counsel give advice to unrepresented clients and speak on their behalf in court on simple matters, but they do not provide representation at trial. This initiative intends to provide assistance to low income litigants who do not qualify for a legal aid referral and therefore must represent themselves in Supreme Court.

Limited Supreme Court family referrals

To further address the needs of unrepresented litigants in Supreme Court, LSS is planning the introduction of limited Supreme Court referrals. These will give the referring lawyers enough hours to help clients draft documents and negotiate with opposing parties or counsel, and provide clients with general advice that will support them as they do most of the work on their own.

Family collaborative law project

This project aims to test the effectiveness of the collaborative law model as a vehicle for settling legal aid family law cases. Feedback from the LSS mediation initiative (implemented and completed last fiscal year) indicates that legal aid lawyers support collaborative law referrals as a cost-effective way to provide brief dispute resolution services. The feedback also suggests that the collaborative process could address the power imbalances that often make mediation inappropriate in cases where there has been violence.

Extended family services referrals

In 2003/2004, LSS implemented an extended family services pilot to fund a limited number of trials. The effectiveness of this pilot was limited by the fact that funding was available only until March 31, 2004. The resulting requirement that all services be completed by year-end did not mesh with trial scheduling in most locations. To provide appropriate services, LSS must be able to commit to funding such cases beyond fiscal year-end. In this new initiative, LSS will provide additional referrals in cases that require legal aid representation to ensure a fair trial. This initiative will also help LSS establish appropriate selection criteria and case management procedures.

Quality assurance

LSS plans to expand its quality assurance (QA) program to close gaps in the current system for both quality enhancements and quality control mechanisms. The LSS quality assurance program will be designed to —

- ensure effective, quality service to LSS clients by private bar referral lawyers; and
- be cost-effective, fair, and transparent.

LSS will actively work with other justice system participants to create an effective and efficient QA program.

Client contributions

LSS is examining the feasibility of implementing a client contribution/expanded eligibility program for its criminal, family, and child protection (Child, Family and Community Service Act) clients. Under such a program, clients would be expected to contribute to the costs of their legal aid if their incomes exceeded current guidelines, but did not exceed a limit beyond which they would not qualify for legal aid. Some costs could be recovered through agreements to pay, liens on real property, application fees, or other means.

Tariff renewal

In early 2004, LSS began a review of its tariff structure. The objectives of this review are to establish a tariff that attracts and retains private bar lawyers who will provide quality services, to promote efficiency and effectiveness within the justice system, and to establish criteria for regular tariff evaluation. The review has confirmed that tariff renewal is essential to ensure lawyers continue to accept LSS referrals and clients receive high standards of service.

LSS plans to refine the tariff structure based on the recommendations in this review, and will actively engage other justice system participants in promoting procedural changes that ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the tariff system and the larger justice system.

Governance at LSS

LSS is managed by a nine-member board of directors; five directors are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and four are appointed by the Law Society of BC. At December 3, 2004, the following people made up the board (the board chair position is vacant):

- Bruce Hardy, Acting Chair
- D. Brent Adair, QC
- Janice Comeau
- Geoffrey Cowper, QC
- Leah George-Wilson
- Larry Goble
- John M. Hogg, QC
- D. Mayland McKimm, QC
- Greg Stacey

Board appointments must take into account the need for the board to have a range of knowledge, skills, and experience in five areas:

- the management of public and private sector organizations;
- the law, the courts, and alternative dispute resolution processes;
- legal aid;
- the cultural and geographic diversity of BC; and
- the special legal needs of people with low incomes.

Photos facing page, from the top:

(From left) Lisa Lefebvre, Administrative Assistant, Legal Information, Technology, and Communications; Catherine McNeil, Director, Finance and Corporate Services; Aruna Mehtani, Receptionist, Surrey Regional Centre; and James Deitch, Manager, Tariff Services, in the intake waiting room during the Vancouver Regional Centre Open House, November 2004.

Fran Auckland, Fieldworker, is based in the Vancouver Regional Centre.

Myrna Segovia, Eligibility/Complaints Co-ordinator (left), and Alicia Rosales, Duty Counsel Co-ordinator/Administrative Assistant, Field Operations, work together in the Vancouver Regional Centre.

Cynthia Bartholomew, LSS Librarian, at work in the stacks.

Frank Lin, Payroll Administrator; Noreen Finnerty, Manager, Human Resources; Chris Pendleton, Human Resources Advisor; Corey Parker, Administrative Assistant, Human Resources; and Ruby Bains Aulakh, Human Resources Advisor, meet in the Vancouver Regional Centre.

Denise Tremblay photos

Kamloops Regional Centre staff (from left) Christine Lougheed, Legal Information Outreach Worker; Marla Krusel, Intake Legal Assistant; Mayumi Paravantes, Receptionist; Kathleen Kendall, Managing Lawyer, Family; and Charlene Loewen, Senior Legal Secretary, meet in the boardroom. *Janet Jeffrey photo*

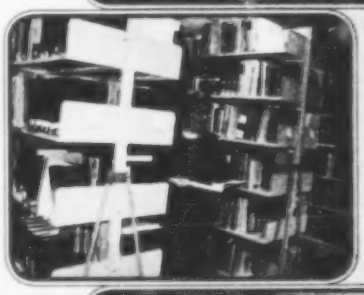
Strategic Context

Our mission

To assist low income individuals to resolve their legal problems by providing a spectrum of services that promotes their effective participation in the justice system.

Our vision

An innovative, collaborative legal aid system responding to the needs of low income people throughout British Columbia.



Our mandate

The society was established by the Legal Services Society Act, S.B.C. 2002, Ch. 30 (the act), for the purpose of developing and maintaining an effective and efficient system of legal aid for low income individuals in British Columbia.

The society's objects, under section 9 of the act, are —

- to assist low income individuals to resolve their legal problems and facilitate access to justice for low income individuals;
- to establish and administer an effective and efficient system for providing legal aid to low income individuals in British Columbia; and
- to provide advice to the Attorney General respecting legal aid.

Our values

Making a difference through leadership, respect, and working with others.

Planning Context and Key Strategic Issues

An environmental scan and risk analysis was conducted by the LSS Executive Management Committee in the fall of 2004 to determine the main factors that will affect the society's ability to achieve its intended results in the next three years.

LSS compared the key strategic issues emerging from this analysis with those identified in the 2004 – 2007 planning process, and adjusted its strategies in its 2005 – 2008 plan accordingly.

The key strategic issues for 2005 – 2008 are the following:

1) Managing to capacity

LSS recognizes that its capable and committed employees form one of the society's main strengths. A dedicated staff, combined with a solid infrastructure and a flexible organization, has allowed LSS to adjust to a major change in its service model quickly and in highly innovative and effective ways. At the same time, rapid change has made maintaining basic management practices more difficult. LSS must now place a priority on enhancing its internal structures to manage workload and to foster strong internal working relationships.

Stakeholders have high expectations that the society will continue to develop innovative ways to serve clients and address systemic problems such as inadequate tariffs. LSS must manage these expectations in line with its capacity.

Sharon Porter, Executive Assistant, Field Operations and Human Resources; Gulnar Najijuma, Executive Assistant, Executive Office; and Joy-Ann Lee, former Executive Assistant, at main reception during the Vancouver Regional Centre Open House, November 2004.
Denise Tremblay photo

2) Fiscal circumstances

To date, there is no indication that the society's major funders will increase their support for LSS. Most new funding realized by LSS in recent years has been for projects. Although stakeholders show confidence in the society's ability to provide legal aid within the constraints of a lower budget, a reliance on project-based funding undermines the society's ability to sustain piloted services that have proven valuable and effective.

Although LSS has accrued a surplus, current legislation prohibits the society from accessing it. The society would have greater budget flexibility if legislative changes were made to allow LSS to access this surplus.

3) Tariff system pressure

Last year, the society's service plan identified the decline in availability of tariff lawyers as a key strategic issue. Feedback from both the tariff lawyers' satisfaction survey and the tariff review confirm the critical nature of this issue. The failure of tariff rates to keep up with inflation and increasing court case complexity place additional stress on the tariff system. Without tariff renewal, more lawyers will decline legal aid referrals, making service disruptions a real possibility.

Ingrid Kapil, Disbursements Assistant; Rochelle Appleby, Tariff Policy Lawyer; Jan Shiels, Case Management Assistant; James Deitch, Manager, Tariff Services; and Shirley Li, Administrative Legal Assistant, Tariff, meet in the Vancouver Regional Centre.
Denise Tremblay photo

4) Justice reform

As a key participant in justice system renewal in BC and the province's primary legal aid provider, LSS is in a unique position to make a valuable contribution to justice reform for people with low incomes. At the same time, the reform process will likely result in changes and initiatives over which LSS has little influence. The risk to LSS is that these changes may require the society to be reactive rather than proactive, and may lead to increased costs and reduced flexibility in delivering legal aid services.

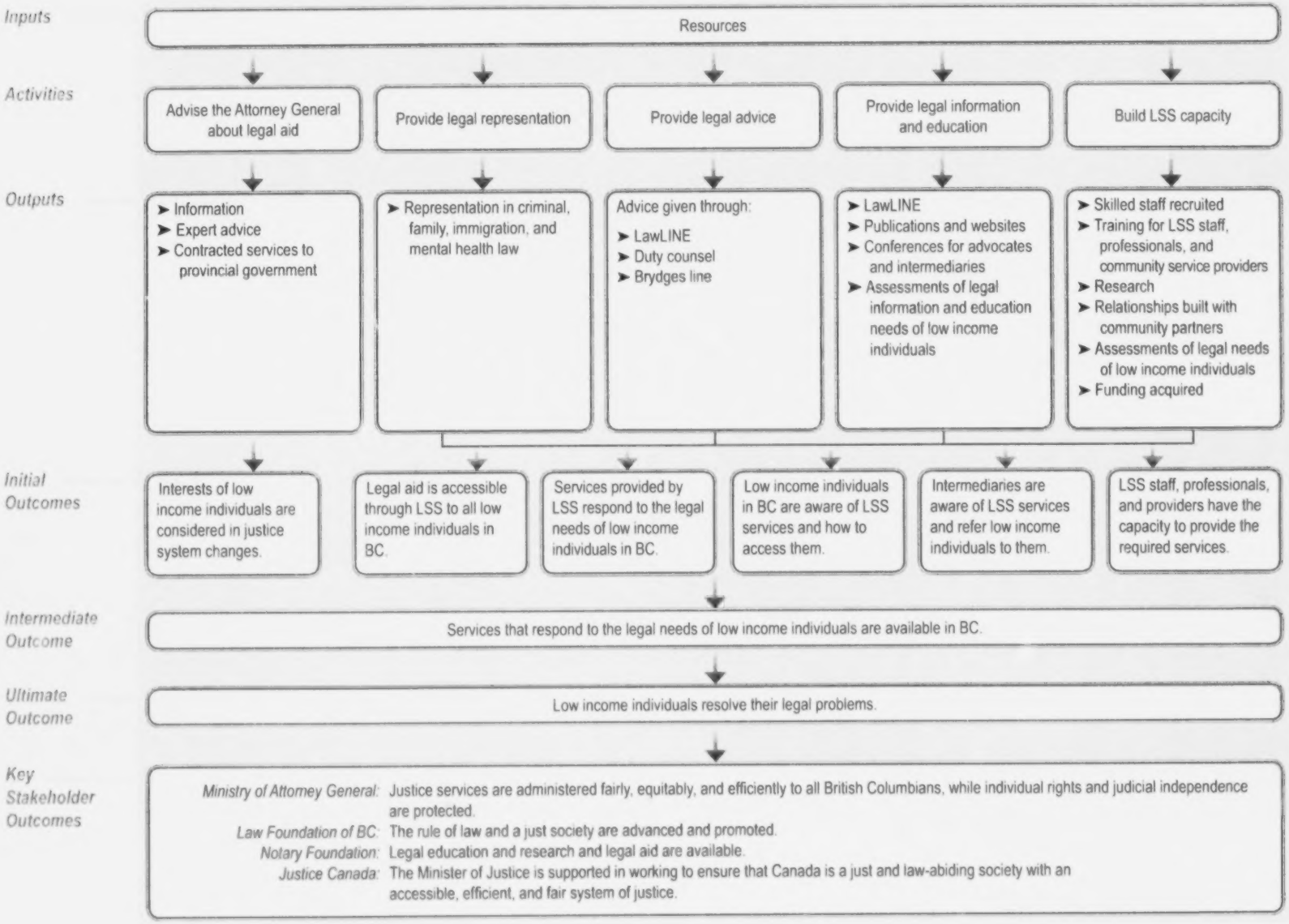
Julie Zaplotinsky, Assistant to Port Alberni Local Agent Barbara Smith, at her desk. *Barbara Smith Photo*

5) Reputation and credibility

LSS has worked hard to establish its reputation as a reliable and effective service provider. The society has proven itself to be an enterprising agency that can get things done. An ongoing commitment to evaluate and learn from its initiatives further enhances the society's success and credibility. Governments and other stakeholders demonstrate confidence in the LSS board, management, and staff.

This positive reputation has increased the interest of other service providers in collaborating with the society to meet client needs. In response, LSS has made efforts to improve communication, collaboration, and co-operation with stakeholders in recognition of the critical contribution they make to the society's ability to meet its goals.

The Society Logic Model


Inputs
Resources
Activities
Advise the Attorney General about legal aid
Provide legal representation
Provide legal advice
Provide legal information and education
Build LSS capacity
Outputs
➤ Information
➤ Expert advice
➤ Contracted services to provincial government
➤ Representation in criminal, family, immigration, and mental health law
Advice given through:
➤ LawLINE
➤ Duty counsel
➤ Brydges line
➤ LawLINE
➤ Publications and websites
➤ Conferences for advocates and intermediaries
➤ Assessments of legal information and education needs of low income individuals
➤ Skilled staff recruited
➤ Training for LSS staff, professionals, and community service providers
➤ Research
➤ Relationships built with community partners
➤ Assessments of legal needs of low income individuals
➤ Funding acquired
Initial Outcomes
Interests of low income individuals are considered in justice system changes.
Legal aid is accessible through LSS to all low income individuals in BC.
Services provided by LSS respond to the legal needs of low income individuals in BC.
Low income individuals in BC are aware of LSS services and how to access them.
Intermediaries are aware of LSS services and refer low income individuals to them.
LSS staff, professionals, and providers have the capacity to provide the required services.
Intermediate Outcome
Services that respond to the legal needs of low income individuals are available in BC.
Ultimate Outcome
Low income individuals resolve their legal problems.
Key Stakeholder Outcomes
Ministry of Attorney General: Justice services are administered fairly, equitably, and efficiently to all British Columbians, while individual rights and judicial independence are protected.
Law Foundation of BC: The rule of law and a just society are advanced and promoted.
Notary Foundation: Legal education and research and legal aid are available.
Justice Canada: The Minister of Justice is supported in working to ensure that Canada is a just and law-abiding society with an accessible, efficient, and fair system of justice.

Goal, Objectives, Key Strategies and Initiatives, Performance Measures and Targets

LSS has defined five objectives and launched a range of initiatives to achieve its long-term goal. The initiatives outlined below are subject to approval of the LSS budget by the Ministry of Attorney General.

Long-term goal

Services that respond to the legal needs of low income individuals are available in BC.

Objective 1

Build and sustain the necessary capacity in LSS staff, systems and processes, professionals, and other service providers to provide LSS services.

Supporting strategies

- Use technology to streamline processes and to build and share knowledge
- Provide tools, training, and support to enable staff and service providers to succeed
- Evaluate and improve functions and programs
- Use alternate service delivery models and third-party providers/professionals to maximize capacity
- Provide clear direction and leadership
- Maintain efficient corporate management functions

Related initiatives

- Implement computer system advances in accounting, knowledge management, and the intranet
- Conduct process and business reviews to evaluate systems and structures, and implement viable changes
- Expand the employee wellness initiative
- Develop and implement new quality assurance measures
- Implement affordable and viable recommendations from the tariff review and lawyers' survey

Objective 1: Performance measures and targets				
Measure	**Baseline 2004/2005**	**2005/2006**	**2006/2007**	**2007/2008**
Overall rating by LSS tariff lawyers of their satisfaction with the support provided by LSS	68% of tariff lawyers satisfied (established 2003/2004)	Not measured this year	Not measured this year	75% of tariff lawyers satisfied
Overall LSS employee satisfaction rating	Establish baseline	Not measured this year	Not measured this year	Improve on baseline

Objective 2

Build the financial capacity to maintain proven initiatives and sustain core services.

Supporting strategies

- Seek revenue-generating opportunities to use existing capacity
- Negotiate access to accumulated surplus funds
- Seek innovative funding arrangements with other justice partners

Related initiatives

- Assess the feasibility of various client contribution approaches to recover some costs and provide funding for client services
- Explore direct funding relationships with the federal government in LSS mandate-related areas of federal responsibility
- Work with the provincial government for legislative change to provide access to accumulated surplus

Objective 2: Performance measures and targets				
Measure *	**Baseline 2004/2005**	**2005/2006**	**2006/2007**	**2007/2008**
Proven initiatives currently funded by short-term funding (list); and budget required for each ($$)	4 initiatives totalling $3.72 million	Reduced reliance on short-term funding to maintain proven programs	Reduced reliance on short-term funding to maintain proven initiatives	Reduced reliance on short-term funding to maintain proven initiatives

* This measure is under review

Baseline calculation

Initiative	Budget 2004/2005
Family duty counsel	$ 2,000,000
LawLINE	$ 1,312,500
LawLINK	$ 171,000
LIOWs	$ 232,000
Total	**$ 3,715,500**

Objective 3

Improve the responsiveness of LSS services to the legal needs of low income individuals.

Supporting strategies

- Provide representation in criminal, family, child protection, immigration, mental health, prison, and Aboriginal law
- Provide advice and information for all areas of law
- Examine partnerships and a variety of delivery mechanisms to maximize the accessibility of services for the available dollars
- Assess client needs to ensure services are appropriate
- Adjust financial eligibility requirements so more low income individuals qualify for legal aid services

Related initiatives

- Expand family duty counsel to Supreme Court
- Expand family services through a new Supreme Court referral project and a pilot project to assess the viability of collaborative law
- Establish enhanced LawLINE services (advice services) as a permanent program
- Establish LawLINK as a permanent program
- Evaluate and, with funds reserved for this purpose, support appropriate community agencies' mediation initiatives in child protection
- Complete an Aboriginal needs assessment to enable LSS to develop mutually supportive and collaborative relationships with BC's First Nations
- Measure the society's performance in meeting client needs

Objective 3: Performance measures and targets

Measure	Baseline 2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Overall rating of client satisfaction with LSS services	N/A	Establish baseline	Not measured this year	Not measured this year
Overall rating by intermediaries of how well LSS responds to the needs of low income individuals in BC	N/A	N/A	Establish baseline	Not measured this year

Objective 4

Increase awareness of LSS services among intermediaries and clients so that more low income individuals with legal needs are referred to appropriate LSS services.

Supporting strategies

- Use appropriate media to bring services to the attention of clients and intermediaries
- Collaborate with communities and intermediaries to increase awareness, credibility, and referrals for LSS services

Related initiatives

- Continue the 2004/2005 campaign to increase awareness of LSS services
- Improve access to LSS services by providing a permanent Legal Information Outreach Worker at each regional centre to help clients access the appropriate legal resources
- Survey intermediaries about their awareness of LSS services

Objective 4: Performance measures and targets

Measure	Baseline 2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Overall rating by intermediaries of their level of awareness of LSS services	N/A	N/A	Establish baseline	Not measured this year

Objective 5

Apply LSS influence to ensure the legal needs of low income individuals are considered in justice system reform.

Supporting strategies

- Advise key stakeholders on the effects of justice system change on low income individuals
- Participate in justice reform initiatives
- Work collaboratively with justice system partners such as the federal government, courts, and private bar to address issues of mutual concern

Related initiatives

- Provide the Attorney General with reports and advice
- Participate in Justice Review Working Groups in criminal, family, and civil law
- Lead the Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) Working Group to co-ordinate PLEI in BC

Objective 5: Performance measures and targets

Measure	Baseline 2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Resources utilized by LSS in providing the Ministry of Attorney General advice regarding legal aid	More than 500 hours	This measure may be revised as justice reform activities evolve	To be determined	To be determined

Alignment with Government's Strategic Plan

In its 2004/2005 – 2006/2007 Strategic Plan, the Government of British Columbia reaffirms its goal (Goal 2) to achieve a "supportive social fabric" for the province. The plan identifies the need for "systems of justice which are accessible, efficient, fair and affordable" and the related objective (Objective 2-C) that "British Columbia will have a fair and efficient system of justice."

LSS supports this goal and objective by providing services that respond to the legal needs of low income individuals and help them resolve their legal problems. LSS makes legal representation, legal advice, and legal information and education available, and takes steps to ensure intermediaries as well as low income individuals are aware of these services. In addition, LSS provides the Attorney General with information and expert advice to inform justice system decisions affecting low income individuals. Through its participation in justice reform activities and legal research, LSS uses its influence to ensure that justice system changes address the legal needs of low income individuals.

Among the strategies identified by the government to achieve Goal 2 and Objective 2-C, are the following:

- Facilitate access to justice through innovative dispute resolution systems, integrated justice services, and technological solutions.
- Ensure criminal cases move through the justice system in a timely and efficient manner.

LSS contributes directly to the first of these through its duty counsel services, call centre, Brydges line, LawLINE, and legal information and education publications and websites, all of which increase access to justice by providing resources and assistance for clients, intermediaries, and service providers. In addition, LSS collaborates with a wide range of justice system partners and other stakeholders to provide innovative, cost-effective services to enhance access to the justice system for low income individuals.

In line with the second government strategy indicated above, LSS has taken innovative measures to facilitate the efficient handling of criminal cases by ensuring representation is available for low income individuals and by streamlining administrative procedures for lawyers, thus eliminating delays and the unproductive use of lawyers' time. E-business tools such as electronic billing enhance tariff lawyers' ability to focus on clients' cases. Large case management processes such as the Strategic Case Assessment Program (SCAP) ensure the efficient allocation of resources to publicly funded criminal defences. The quality assurance program ensures that cases are not prolonged due to inadequate representation and that resources are provided to the private bar to enhance the quality of representation provided to our clients.

Alignment with Goals of Other Key Stakeholders

LSS works closely with its partners in the justice system to seek cost-effective ways of meeting the legal needs of low income individuals while also advancing the goals of all stakeholders. LSS acknowledges the support and collaboration of the Ministry of Attorney General, the Notary Foundation of BC, the Law Foundation of BC, and Justice Canada. Funding from each of these partners is used to support the society's legal information, education, advice, and representation programs. In turn, LSS services contribute to the following outcomes, which are encompassed in the goals of these stakeholders:

Ministry of Attorney General

Justice services are administered fairly, equitably, and efficiently to all British Columbians, while protecting individual rights and judicial independence.

Law Foundation of BC

The rule of law and a just society are advanced and promoted.

Notary Foundation of BC

Legal education and research and legal aid are available.

Justice Canada

The Minister of Justice is supported in working to ensure that Canada is a just and law-abiding society with an accessible, efficient, and fair system of justice.

LSS Summary Financial Outlook
2005 – 2008 *(in millions)*

	2003/2004 Actual	2004/2005 Latest forecast	2005/2006* Budget	2006/2007 Forecast	2007/2008 Forecast
Revenue					
Government of BC grant	$ 64.0	$ 56.8	$ 62.0	$ 62.8	$ 63.4
Federal Investment Fund (includes large federal cases)	1.6	4.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Law Foundation	3.6	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Notary Foundation	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7
Other	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8
Total revenue	**71.1**	**65.8**	**70.0**	**70.8**	**71.5**
Expenses					
Tariff	51.1	44.8	44.4	44.3	44.4
Large federal cases	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Regional centres/local agents	5.5	6.1	9.1	9.1	9.1
Public Legal Education and Information	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Strategic priorities	4.6	2.3	6.1	7.0	7.5
Federal Investment Fund initiatives	1.0	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Other	5.1	5.9	5.2	5.2	5.2
Total expenses	**69.2**	**62.7**	**70.0**	**70.8**	**71.4**
Net income	**$ 1.9**	**$ 3.1**	**$ 0.0**	**$ 0.0**	**$ 0.0**
Full-time equivalents	**143.0**	**143.0**	**143.0**	**143.0**	**143.0**

* The numbers for 2005/2006 are pending approval by the Attorney General of BC.

Key assumptions	Forecast risks and sensitivities
• The budget approved by the LSS Board will be approved by the Province of British Columbia. • The MOU with the Ministry of Attorney General will be amended to reflect the LSS Board-approved budget, including providing $1.7 million for immigration services. • Support from the Federal Investment Fund will be extended through 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 in the amount of $2.6 million per year. • No material change in the number of cases prosecuted by the province.	• Unanticipated increases in the volume of cases. • Inflationary pressures. • The costs and/or timing of exceptional cases. • Cancellation of support from the Federal Investment Fund. • Change in interest rates could affect the investment return or the funding from the Notary Foundation and the Law Foundation.

Appendix 1:

Departmental Work Linked to Service Plan Objectives

This section indicates how the core work of staff in each LSS department contributes to specific objectives set out in this service plan. It should be recognized that all the society's core work is interrelated and critical to the achievement of the society's goal. The work of any one department may contribute to many objectives; however, only the primary linkages are outlined below.

Appeals

Objective #5

- Applying LSS influence by moving cases forward to the Appeals Courts where clarification of the law is needed, a miscarriage of justice has occurred, or representation is required in the interests of justice

Audit and Investigation

Objective #2

- Building financial capacity by implementing and monitoring systems that ensure LSS is getting the services it pays for

Objective #3

- Improving responsiveness of LSS services through quality assurance

Photos from top of page: Coordinator, Service Projects (family duty counsel) Sherry MacLennan in her office in the Vancouver Regional Centre.

Tariff Accounts Examiner, Jennifer Ho-Wang, in her Vancouver Regional Centre office.

Staff in training at the Vancouver Regional Centre.

Janice Staryk, Manager, Tariff Operations, at her desk in the Vancouver Regional Centre.

Sharon Porter, Executive Assistant, Field Operations and Human Resources, at the Vancouver Regional Centre.

Denise Tremblay photos

Communications

Objective #1

- Supporting LSS staff and service providers with professional communications services

Objective #4

- Increasing awareness of LSS services among various stakeholders and advances

Community Services

Objective #3

- Improving responsiveness of LSS services through projects like LawLINE and through community outreach programs

Objective #4

- Increasing awareness of LSS services through campaigns and community outreach

Corporate Research

Objective #1

- Building LSS capacity by providing timely and accurate information to key decision makers, enabling them to make informed choices regarding policy and other changes

Objective #3

- Improving responsiveness of LSS services through strategic performance management and development of the service plan

Facilities and Administration

Objective #1

- Enhancing LSS capacity by ensuring that the society has adequate facilities to fulfill its mission and that staff have a safe and secure environment to work in

Objective #3

- Enabling responsiveness to client needs through professional facilities and administrative management

Field Operations

Objective #3

- Providing access to legal aid services through regional offices, local agents, and the province-wide call centre

Objective #4

- Increasing awareness of LSS services through LIOWs, intake, and duty counsel services, and by collaborating with advocacy groups for service delivery

Objective #5

- Applying LSS influence by participating in inter-agency committees and taking part in justice reform initiatives and working groups (Justice Review Task Force, Drug Court, and the Supreme Court self-help project)

Finance

Objective #2

- Building financial capacity through astute budgeting and management of LSS funds

Objective #3

- Increasing responsiveness to client needs by prudent use of available funds

Lisa Xiang, Accounting Clerk, in the Vancouver Regional Centre.
Denise Tremblay photo

Human Resources

Objective #1

- Building LSS capacity by providing training, recruitment, and support of LSS staff and service providers, as well as organizational management and wellness programs

Charles Boname, Supervisor, Computer Services, at the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Denise Tremblay photo*

Information Technology

Objective #1

- Supporting and enhancing the capacity of staff and other service providers by building and maintaining computer systems and introducing automation, where appropriate

Objective #3

- Increasing responsiveness to client needs through innovative and expert information systems management

Objective #4

- Increasing awareness of LSS services through websites and LawLINK public access computers

Public Legal Education and Information

Objective #3

- Increasing the responsiveness of LSS services by developing PLEI materials that meet changing client needs

Denise Tremblay, Graphic Designer (at the computer); Jacqueline Wood, Editor (standing); Kathryn Spracklin, Editor (sitting on left); and Candice Lee, Supervisor, Publishing Program, discuss a publishing project at the Vancouver Regional Centre. *Donna Crawford photo*

Objective #4

- Building awareness of LSS services through publications, websites, and work in the field

Objective #5

- Contributing information that helps LSS apply influence in the justice system to ensure the legal needs of low income people are met

Tariff Operations

Objective #1

- Enhancing tariff lawyer capacity by ensuring that lawyers have the information they require to invoice LSS and to receive prompt and accurate payment, and by educating lawyers about tariff policies and procedures

Tariff Services

Objective #1

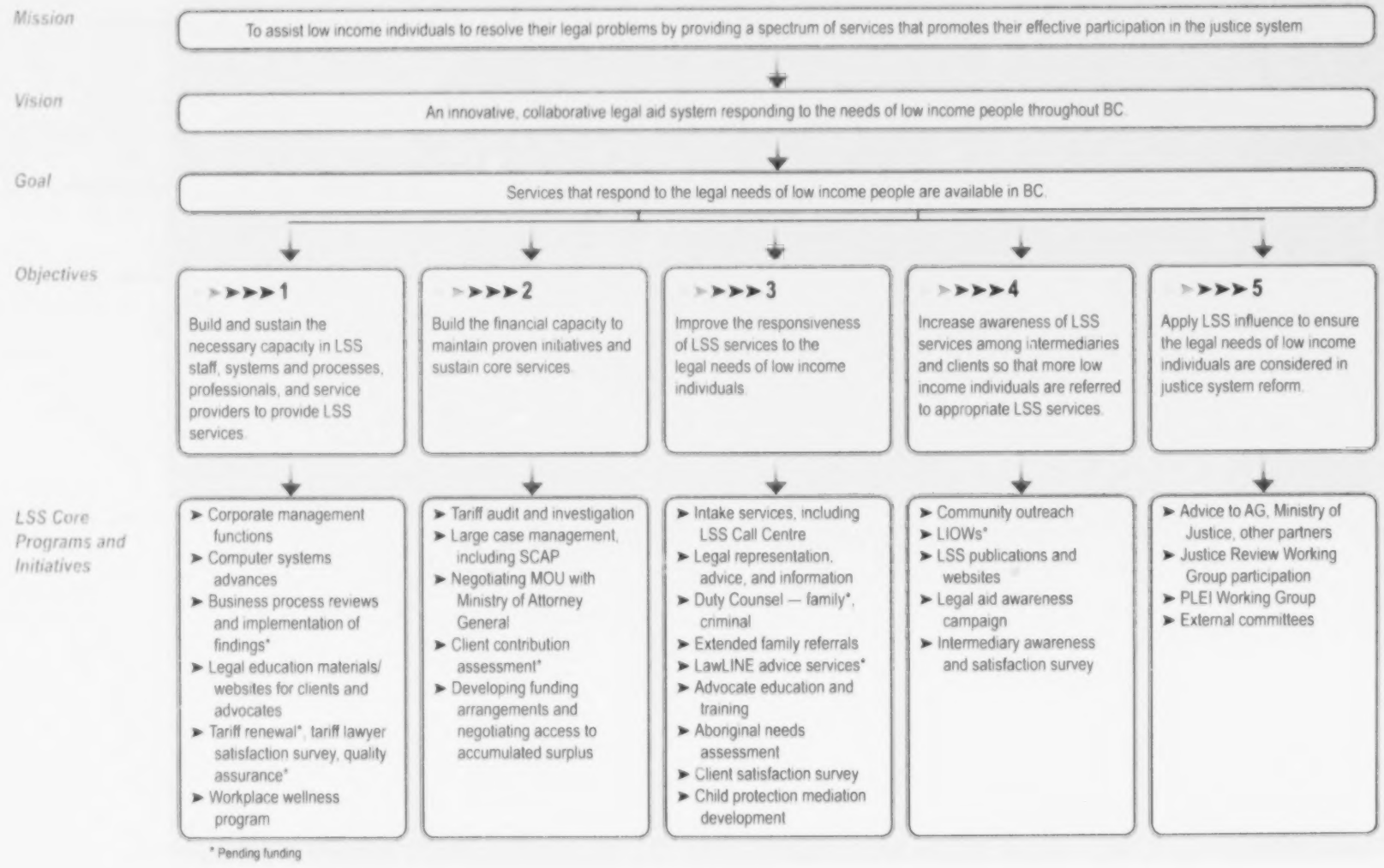
- Enhancing the capacity of service providers through effective management and development of the *Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs*

Objective #3

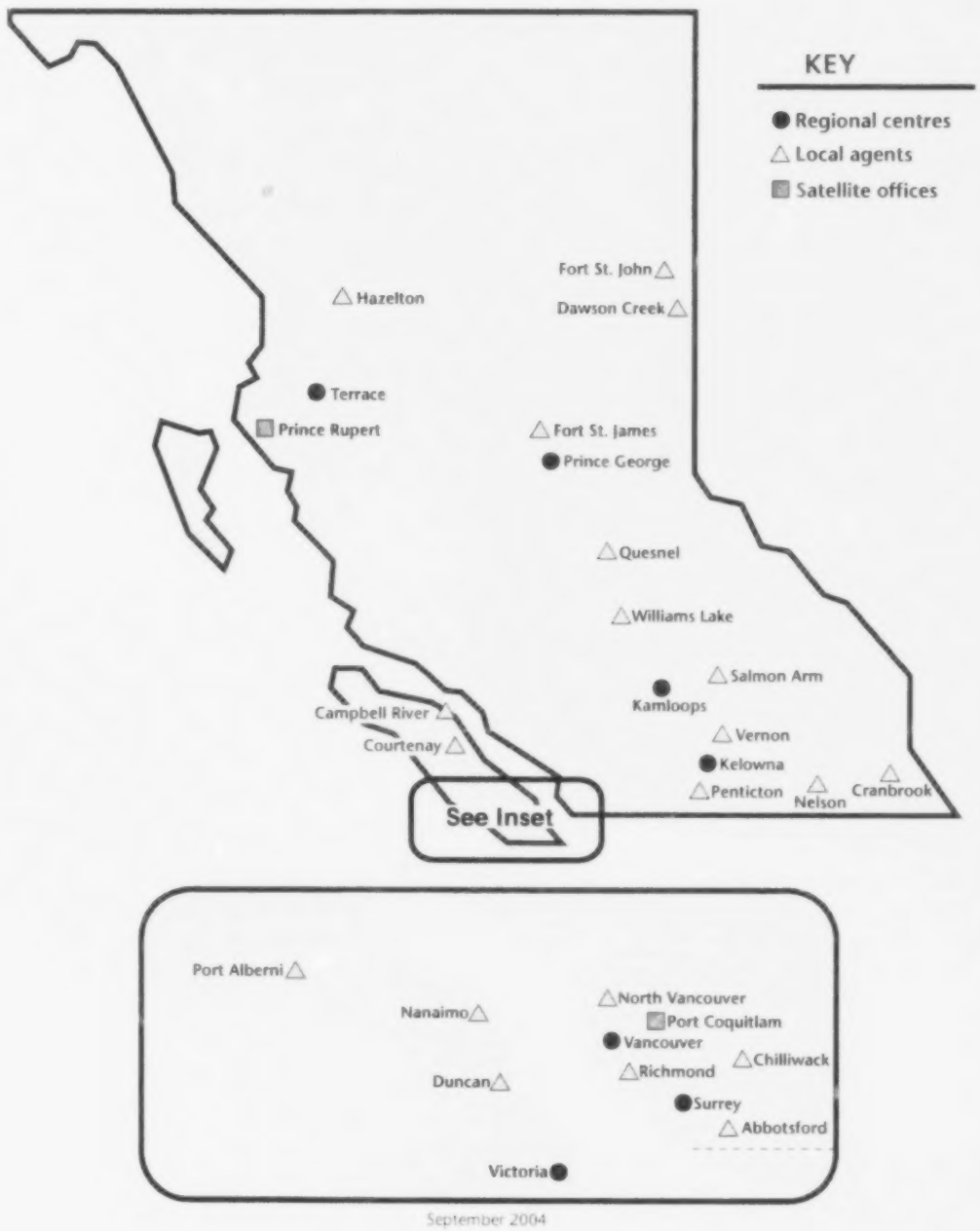
- Increasing the responsiveness of LSS services by developing policy and managing complex cases for low income individuals

Appendix 2:

LSS Service Plan Overview


Mission
To assist low income individuals to resolve their legal problems by providing a spectrum of services that promotes their effective participation in the justice system
Vision
An innovative, collaborative legal aid system responding to the needs of low income people throughout BC
Goal
Services that respond to the legal needs of low income people are available in BC
Objectives
1
Build and sustain the necessary capacity in LSS staff, systems and processes, professionals, and service providers to provide LSS services.
2
Build the financial capacity to maintain proven initiatives and sustain core services.
3
Improve the responsiveness of LSS services to the legal needs of low income individuals.
4
Increase awareness of LSS services among intermediaries and clients so that more low income individuals are referred to appropriate LSS services.
5
Apply LSS influence to ensure the legal needs of low income individuals are considered in justice system reform.
LSS Core Programs and Initiatives
Corporate management functions
Computer systems advances
Business process reviews and implementation of findings*
Legal education materials/ websites for clients and advocates
Tariff renewal*, tariff lawyer satisfaction survey, quality assurance*
Workplace wellness program
Tariff audit and investigation
Large case management, including SCAP
Negotiating MOU with Ministry of Attorney General
Client contribution assessment*
Developing funding arrangements and negotiating access to accumulated surplus
Intake services, including LSS Call Centre
Legal representation, advice, and information
Duty Counsel — family*, criminal
Extended family referrals
LawLINE advice services*
Advocate education and training
Aboriginal needs assessment
Client satisfaction survey
Child protection mediation development
Community outreach
LIOWs*
LSS publications and websites
Legal aid awareness campaign
Intermediary awareness and satisfaction survey
Advice to AG, Ministry of Justice, other partners
Justice Review Working Group participation
PLEI Working Group
External committees
* Pending funding

Map of Legal Aid Offices



September 2004